

7 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Procedures for Producing Military Estimates

Attached is a draft of a Memorandum which I suggest you send to me (or to Huizenga). It sets forth some changes, or at least some clarifications, in the memo you sent me on May 4, 1970. I have checked out this draft with [redacted] and I believe you are aware of the reasons why we think it would be useful if you gave us instructions along these lines.

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Though they were promised for two weeks ago, we have not yet received suggestions from the White House about the content and structure of the next cycle of military estimates. Whatever the format of these papers, however, we think that the procedures we suggest would be valid.

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[redacted]

ABBOT SMITH
Director
National Estimates

Attachment

Note: After this was typed, I received a copy of a letter General Bennett is sending to you. This letter will raise some problems.

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MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ESTIMATES

SUBJECT: Production of Military Estimates

As we all know, NIE's 11-8-70 and 11-3-71 have been well received by consumers at the highest levels of the government, and I am glad that our military estimates now appear to be on the right track. No doubt they can be further improved as we become more accustomed to the new and extended format, and as we receive suggestions and recommendations from our readers.

Production of these estimates was inordinately delayed, owing in part to the much greater length and detail in which the material was set forth. But there appear also to have been problems arising out of the procedures, admittedly experimental, which I outlined to you last year for producing these papers. I want therefore to modify and clarify my earlier memorandum so as to insure that the estimates are produced more expeditiously and with less expenditure of time by analysts.

Clearly it will continue to be essential that parts of the papers -- especially the sections setting forth detailed technical analysis and evidence -- be initially drafted by people from those offices in the Agency and elsewhere in the Community which have daily responsibility for analyzing developments in these fields. Within the Agency, the device of a task force for this purpose has proved useful. In future, these task forces should include members of the ONE Staff to insure closer collaboration and greater efficiency.

The Board of National Estimates, and specifically the Board member designated as Chairman of the paper, remain responsible for the content and structure of the estimate as a whole. The first stage in production ought therefore to be meetings between the Board, the Agency task force, and Community representatives to discuss and agree on the main issues to be addressed, the scope of their treatment, and a working outline in as much detail as may be feasible. The Board Chairman should then assign initial drafting responsibility for various sections to the Agency task force, other participating agencies, and the ONE Staff as may seem to him appropriate.

Once the initial drafts have come in there will generally be more or less redrafting and revision necessary to produce a coherent and structured paper. This stage of the process should be carried out under the close supervision of the Board Chairman, and I think it desirable that the ONE Staff do as much as possible of the actual rewriting to achieve a well integrated working draft. During this phase close consultation with the Agency task force will continue. When a draft satisfactory to the Board has been produced, coordination with representatives of participating agencies will proceed as before.

Obviously we must produce these estimates on the schedule to which we commit ourselves and on which consumers rely. I wish therefore that all concerned should give to their preparation the highest priority, subject only to clearly overriding demands of work on other projects of great urgency.